

Chair report for 2023 AGM 13th March

2022 provided some great tennis for the club. Sunny days and life getting back to “normal” meant people could brush the cobwebs off their rackets and get out there to play. Membership levels were down from our record high in 2021 but we have maintained our numbers from pre COVID days. We will again be offering free membership for the month of April, so if you have friends and family who are keen to “have a go” please encourage them to take up our offer.

We also managed to increase our social events to two this year. The Texas Golf Scramble raised around £600 and an extremely successful quiz night in November raised over £1500. We also launched our 300 club, perhaps a tad ambitious as we do have more tickets to sell (for £10 you have a 1 in 30 chance of winning a cash prize). Many thanks to our social convener Emma Ferguson and all her helpers who helped make these events so enjoyable.

The competition calendar has been packed in the 2022 season with all our teams competing across NE Scotland (NESLTA) as well as more locally in Deeside leagues. Some of the ladies “graduated” from the social league to playing in a 3rd NESLTA team with the men's teams fielding 25 players across the season. In terms of activities within the club, the autumn and spring mixed doubles competitions continue to prove popular. A very healthy club champs saw some new faces entering (and winning) various divisions. (refer to the dedicated Competition report from Sarah Hoare and Andrew Fyfe for further details).

As you will all know by now, Graham Kay has had an addition to his family (maybe an Andy Murray of the future ?) and has left the club to pursue other opportunities. Graham was an integral part of the success of the club over the last 10 plus years and we wish him the best in his new endeavours. Whilst we have already started working on securing a new coach, our top priority is to keep our junior members active on the tennis courts. We have established a new “Youth Club Night” for secondary age juniors (every Thursday 6-8pm) and are also working on pulling together a schedule to allow all juniors access to at least one organised club “session” per week.

From the accounts report you will see that we have a very healthy bank balance. Every year we put money from our subscriptions into a “sinking fund” . This money will be spent in the coming years in order to maintain the great facilities we have put in place. Whilst we are still on track for the near term, there are some challenges.

In terms of the facilities, we will be repainting our courts, most likely in 2024. A preliminary quote suggests costs are up 33% on the sinking fund assumptions. We are seeking additional quotes albeit the range of suppliers for this service in Scotland is limited. Recently we have been experiencing some issues with our lighting panels and are working closely with the original supplier to get it sorted (they should last circa 10 years...). Having investigated the merits of felling the Douglas fir to the west of the tennis courts, we have elected to drop this initiative. The land owner was reluctant to give us permission for the exercise. Our electricity prices will potentially be increasing by over 300% over the next twelve months but this will depend on floodlight usage.

As a result of the increases in costs, in association with a detailed look at our expenses going forward, we will be proposing to increase membership fees by 10% this year (please refer to the finance and membership reports for more detail).

Thank-you to everyone who completed the club survey. We only had 30 responses, but a lot of great ideas were raised regarding future social events and improvements that could be made to the club and facilities. These ideas will be factored into our yearly calendar and long term plans.

The club can't run without a committee and I am very lucky to have such a strong team working together on all of the challenges that come with volunteering for a local organisation. We will be very sad to lose two members this year.

Joss Marshall has been involved with the committee for 25 years covering many roles; membership secretary, junior rep, secretary, chair and most recently COVID officer. Joss is still actively involved with the juniors providing sessions (with Christine Fyfe) for the after school club. She is also an integral member of our competition squad and the originator of the Senior Club Champ competitions that are proving to be popular. Even though Joss will be leaving the committee, we haven't let her escape completely. She will still continue to be a general helper/dogsbody for the club (her words not mine !) and is already getting new equipment organised to aid our coaching efforts.

Sarah Hoare will also be stepping down from her role as Aboyne Ladies Captain. Over the last three years Sarah has been involved in welcoming new ladies to the club, organising club competitions and running our ladies' NESLTA teams (otherwise known as herding cats :). Sarah will still of course be active in the club and is one of our top players.

However, we do need people to step up and join the committee, to ensure the continued success of the club. Keren Beveridge has been carrying out the essential role of treasurer for the past two years, but will be stepping down from that role this year. Luckily, she has agreed to stay on the committee and take over some of Sarah's commitments as Lady Captain (together with Jemima Curran). So, we urgently need someone to take over as treasurer for the club. We do not meet that many times in the year and can be flexible, as we know you are all very busy. Even if you are just keen to "help out" please do contact us.

Finally we are always keen to hear member's views on how we can continue to develop and improve the club. Please contact a committee member (details of whom are on the website) or send an email to aboynetennis@gmail.com

Tamara Sebire
27th February 2023